



UNITED STATES SUBMARINE VETERANS, INC.

Groton Base Commander – John C Carcioppolo
40 School Street Groton, CT 06340-3940

Testimony of

Harrison H. Solt III, LT (SS/SW) USN RET; United States Submarine Veterans, Inc. (USSVI) Groton Base
Silent Service Special Interest License Plate USSVI/DMV Liaison;

Veterans Affairs Committee Public Hearing
Tuesday February 19, 2013

General Assembly Proposed Bill S. B. 700

That chapter 246 of the general statutes be amended to require the Commissioner of Motor Vehicles to verify that a veteran who applies for a special certificate of registration and set of number plates reflecting his or her status as a Purple Heart recipient has been awarded the Purple Heart by obtaining a copy of such veteran's DD 214.

Introduction:

My name is Harrison Solt. I live in Gales Ferry and have been a resident of Connecticut since 1975. I am the United States Submarine Veterans, Inc. (USSVI) Groton Base Silent Service (SS) Special Interest License Plate USSVI/DMV Liaison. I have been the SS License Plate USSVI/DMV Liaison since 2009. I appreciate this opportunity to address the Veterans' Affairs Committee to voice my personal opposition to Proposed Bill S. B. 700. While I do not speak for the Groton Base USSVI Membership I am comfortable, having served as Liaison for over three years, that many of the Membership share my beliefs and feelings regarding Proposed Bill S. B. 700.

The United States Submarine Veterans Incorporated Creed:

"To perpetuate the memory of our shipmates who gave their lives in the pursuit of their duties while serving their country. That their dedication, deeds and supreme sacrifice be a constant source of motivation toward greater accomplishments. Pledge loyalty and patriotism to the United States of America and its Constitution."

"Silent Service" special interest license plate:

The Connecticut "Silent Service" special interest license plate is emblazoned with the USSVI symbol, which in itself is emblazoned with the submarine dolphins. The Plate Liaison's responsibility is to insure the criteria established for one to qualify for this plate is complied with. Since its inception the "Silent Service" (SS) organizational special interest license plate for automobiles and trucks has been well received and a great success. When seen, many people comment on the license plate, engaging the submarine veteran in conversation or simply thanking him for his service to our country. This brings great pride to the organization, the individual, and supports the USSVI creed. Membership in "good standing", and documented qualification in submarines, among other criteria, is required to apply for a "Silent Service" license plate. Members take great pride in displaying their plate and feel comfortable when they see a plate that the plate owner has met the criteria for the plate as established by the Organization.

The decision to issue/grant an organizational based Connecticut Special Interest license plate must reside with the organization. To do otherwise increases the burden on DMV staff and under mines the organization's mission and vision. Organizations, be it Military Order of the Purple Heart, USSVI, Elks, Lions, or whomever have gone to great effort to establish plate criteria that is fair, equitable, and in keeping with the standards, mission, and beliefs of the Organization. The checks and balances all have in place insure this fairness as well as maintenance of the spirit

and intent and integrity of the plate and their organization. Being an Organizational plate, who better to establish criteria, manage the process, and work closely with DMV in the issuance of the plate than the Organization. Removing the decision process for issuance of an organizational special interest plate from the Organization would result in loss of control of the process. More importantly, the mission, purpose, and integrity of the plate would surely be lost and then thus that of the organization. Members of any given organization that support and display an organizational special interest plate are very protective of that plate. They adamantly oppose the granting of and display of a plate by someone not certified to do so by the organization. If the decision and control process of a special interest license plate is removed from the organization any semblance of management of such a plate will be lost. Any semblance of Organizational unity and plate meaning and integrity will be compromised if not lost.

Closing remarks:

Members display an organizational special interest plate because they believe in and actively support the organization, its mission, and goals. They do it for the organization not themselves. One must question the motives of someone who would desire to have the recognition of a special interest plate but not the link or connection to the organization. Such acts smack of self gratification and personal promotion rather than the camaraderie, organizational goals and mission support that membership in an organization represents.

Again, I do not speak for the Officers and Membership of USSVI Groton Base. However, I have every confidence that many strongly oppose any legislative change that would move the special interest license plate criteria or eligibility decision process from the Organization. I respectfully recommend and request that Proposed Bill 700 not be approved. Thank you very much for this opportunity to provide testimony before your Committee.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "H. H. Solt" followed by a stylized flourish or underline.

Harrison H. Solt III

Cc:
Bill 700 Sponsors